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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/169 and includes information on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in that resolution.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/169, in which the Assembly requested that the Secretary-General submit to it at its sixty-ninth session a report that included information provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in that resolution. The report contains summaries of the information received from Member States.[1]

II. Information received from Member States

Austria

2. The Government of Austria reported that it has launched and supported dialogue initiatives that are designed to promote democracy and universal respect for human rights and basic human freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief. A task force that promotes a "Dialogue of cultures", within the Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, is mandated to implement key initiatives.

3. The fifth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, on the theme of "Responsible leadership in diversity and dialogue", was held in Vienna in February 2013, with the attendance of the Secretary-General and over 1,500 participants from Governments, civil society, academia and the media. A youth event was also organized and brought together 150 youth participants from 94 countries. The outcomes of the Forum are reflected in the Vienna Declaration on the Alliance of Civilizations.

4. The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, located in Vienna, provides a platform to discuss the potential of religious communities to foster conflict resolution, peace and reconciliation as well as social cohesion and development. A project on "Training in dialogue and integration for imams, spiritual advisers and mosque associations" has been successfully implemented in the past years in Austria, in partnership with the Islamic community in Austria as well as the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet).

5. The integration strategy of the Government of Austria, based on the National Action Plan for Integration, is essentially an anti-discrimination strategy in that the strategy does not distinguish between ethnic or religious groups, as all immigrants are treated equally and, therefore, should be protected from discrimination. To evaluate how immigrants view the process of integration, a survey of over 1,000 people with an immigrant background was undertaken two years ago, and the Government of Austria has concluded that its integration strategy, as an anti-discrimination strategy, has had a positive effect on integration in the country.

6. Since 2011, the State Secretary of Integration has been focusing on intercultural and interreligious dialogue within the framework of the National

[1] Full texts of the submissions are available for consultation at the Anti-Racial Discrimination Section of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Action Plan for Integration. In 2012, the Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs initiated the Dialogue Forum Islam, a platform for dialogue with the Muslim community in Austria aimed at establishing an exchange of thoughts and at addressing legal and social issues of concern to Muslims in Austria, such as Islamism, Islamophobia and integration.

Azerbaijan

7. Azerbaijan stated that there have not been any reported cases of racism, religious intolerance or stigmatization in Azerbaijan. At the same time, the State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Work of Religious Organizations regularly undertakes activities to preserve stability in the sphere of religious relationships. In the framework of its mandate, the State Committee prevents the import and dissemination in the country of religious literature of a harmful nature or containing religious extremism and intolerance to other religions.

8. As a rule, the State Committee organizes events and meetings on the issues in question in close collaboration with the authorities at various levels and with the participation of religious leaders and communities. A number of meetings were organized together with the Ministry of Justice, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Union of Mass Media. Several important international meetings were organized in Azerbaijan over the past few years, including a forum entitled "State and religion: strengthening tolerance in the changing world" (December 2012) and the second World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (May-June 2013).

9. Following the initiative of the President of Azerbaijan, a book and a film were prepared entitled "Azerbaijan: the country of tolerance".

Belarus

10. The Government of Belarus stated that its policy in the sphere of confessional relations is regulated by the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, which guarantees equality and non-discrimination to all religions before the law.

11. It added that the Law on Countering Extremism declares punishable by law all the criminal acts listed in article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Law on Political Parties and the Law on Non-Governmental Associations prohibit the creation and functioning of political parties, non-governmental associations and unions intended to propagate war or extremism. The Law on Mass Media guarantees rights and freedoms in mass media and prohibits the dissemination of information containing incitement to war, violence and extremism. Those anti-discrimination measures extend to all people living in the territory of Belarus, including foreign citizens, migrant workers and stateless persons.

12. Belarus noted several practical measures undertaken to implement the legislation effectively and to support inter-confessional dialogue. The Second Programme on Development of Confessional Spheres, National Relations and Compatriots Cooperation for the period 2011-2015 has been undertaken. The realization of the rights to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion and belief

is under the competence of the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities. The Commissioner has representatives in all regions of the country. The Inter-Confessional Consultative Council, under the Commissioner, coordinates the activity of religious organizations and promotes and consolidates peace for coexistence, tolerance and dialogue between representatives of different confessions and religions. The Social Morality Council was established in 2009 to assist the Government in resolving social problems.

13. In Belarus, there are more than 3,000 religious organizations, of which 164 are registered at the level of the Republic while the others are registered at the local level. There are also 26 confessions and religious groups. All religious organizations are exempt from taxes on land and real estate property. Belarus reported on the absence of conflicts on the grounds of national, racial, cultural, linguistic and confessional affiliation. According to a recent opinion poll, 93 per cent of those polled considered inter-confessional relations to be stable in Belarus and 82 per cent were satisfied with the number of premises available for religious ceremonies, rites and services.

Czech Republic

14. The applicable constitutional legislation (Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms) and the international human rights instruments binding on the Czech Republic prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion, faith or belief. They also safeguard the freedom of thought and conscience, the freedom of religion, the freedom of practice of faith and religion, and the freedom of churches and religious societies. The Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, faith or belief in a number of public sectors.

15. The Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits direct as well as indirect discrimination, harassment and persecution as well as instructions to discriminate and incitement to discriminate.

16. The national body responsible for action against discrimination is the Public Defender of Rights, whose role is to help to promote the right to equal treatment, to provide methodological guidance to victims in asserting their rights, to conduct research and to publish reports and recommendations on issues related to discrimination. The main focus is on guidance and public information.

17. Propaganda and attacks motivated by religious intolerance are crimes under Czech law. The Criminal Code (2009) includes the definition of crimes of violence against a group in the population or against an individual, dangerous threats, dangerous persecution, defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other group of persons, and incitement to hatred for a group of persons or to actions restricting their rights and freedoms. The gravest crimes targeting national, ethnic, religious or other groups are classified as crimes against humanity.

18. In many other definitions of crimes, the presence of the element of religious intolerance automatically results in a heavier penalty. In addition to these definitions that are specifically designed to apply to cases of attacks motivated by religious intolerance, the element of religious intolerance is also included in the list of general aggravating circumstances that attract stricter penalties in any case. To prevent the formation of groups promoting religious or other intolerance, the Civil

Code (2014) introduced a ban on the establishment of a legal person in cases where the purpose of such a legal person is to deny or restrict the individual, political or other rights of individuals because of their nationality, sex, race, origin, political or other opinion, religion or social status (section 145).

19. As in past years, the Culture Ministry's Churches Department has not identified any manifestations of religious intolerance on the part of registered churches and religious societies and their representatives. The registration and activity of churches and religious societies is regulated by Act No. 3/2002 (Churches and Religious Societies Act), as amended, concerning the freedom of religion and the status of churches and religious societies.

20. The Czech Republic reported that the Government Council for Human Rights includes experts on religious freedom and that the Council has a subsidiary Committee against Discrimination, set up to address discrimination on all grounds, including religion, faith or belief. The Churches Department also promotes interfaith dialogue, and grants financial subsidies to civic associations and activities countering racial and religious prejudice and contributing to interfaith dialogue.

Germany

21. Germany reported that the Federal Government programme on "Cohesion through participation" continued to fund projects for democratic participation, combating extremism in eastern Germany, and establishing a lively and democratic community culture. Between 2010 and 2013, significant funding was allocated primarily to towns and communities particularly affected by social and economic changes. This programme, which has been extended to 2016, is designed to prevent potential extremist threats and to strengthen the essential requirements for peaceful coexistence on an equal footing.

22. The Federal Agency for Civic Education and other recognized civic education bodies provide a wide range of initiatives on migration and integration issues, including printed materials and a wide range of online formats (e.g. teaching material), school competitions and programmes for local journalists, as well as study trips to Israel. It stated that given Germany's history, providing information about the Holocaust represents one of the Federal Agency's focus areas. The Federal Government also actively supports networking and civic engagement, for instance, through the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance.

23. For many years, the Federal Ministry of the Interior has successfully promoted Christian-Jewish cooperation and interreligious and intercultural dialogue between Christians and Jews; in recent years, it has extended the dialogue to a trialogue at the international level with Muslims. The Ministry promotes, inter alia, the German Coordination Council of Associations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation, the International Council of Christians and Jews and various individual projects seeking to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue between these faiths.

24. In May 2013, a working group set up by the German Islam Conference (www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de) published a declaration on "Promoting social cohesion: preventing polarization", and launched an initiative against social polarization focused on preventing anti-Muslim attitudes, anti-Semitism and "Islamism being understood as extremism among Muslims motivated by religion".

The Conference also identified criteria to fund projects, primarily with young people. In addition, the recommendations by the German Islam Conference and the Scientific Council form the basis for the establishment of four Islamic theology centres at German universities. The Federal Government has earmarked funds to promote these centres over a period of five years in an effort to train students as Islamic researchers, social workers, Islamic religion teachers and Islamic scholars to teach at mosques, among other things.

25. The National Action Plan on Integration (2007) addresses "immigrants in the public service" and demonstrates the commitment of the Federal Government to raising the number of staff members with an immigrant background in the public service. Germany reported that, to date, their ratio is relatively low when measured against their share of the overall number of employed persons in Germany. It reported that providing all social groups with the opportunity to take part in decision-making processes and tapping their knowledge and abilities — irrespective of their faith or belief — is a challenge yet to be met by the public administration.

26. In Germany, offences involving discrimination against persons based on religion or belief — particularly violent offences — are separately recorded and analysed as hate crimes and are considered politically motivated crimes. Approximately 90 per cent of these offences have been attributed to right-wing-oriented and politically motivated crimes. Under criminal law, hate crime involving contempt for other human beings — which includes discrimination or violence based on religion or faith — means that the courts generally hand out stricter sentences, or, in the case of murders — consider the offender to have acted on biased motives (section 211 of the Criminal Code). Specific forms of hate crime involving religious aspects are also punishable, depending on the individual case, as incitement to hatred (section 130 of the German Criminal Code), as the defamation of religious associations (section 166 of the Code) or as insults (section 185 of the Code), at least if the offence was targeted at individuals.

27. According to police crime statistics, a total of 2,404 cases of incitement to hatred and 60 cases of defamation of religious associations were reported in 2013, with the clear-up rate being 65 per cent and 36.7 per cent, respectively. Insults with a religious background are recorded under the sub-heading "religion", provided an application for criminal prosecutions is filed.

28. In Germany, the police work to combat hate crimes through several measures. Firstly, hate crimes are prosecuted as offences against State security and are recorded separately. The police forces take regular preventive measures such as stepping up physical protection or police controls with regard to especially vulnerable points, such as Jewish cemeteries. Secondly, the police work to analyse the national number of cases through a differentiated analysis, enabling policymakers to draw important conclusions for potential prevention measures. Thirdly, in 2009, the catalogue of police measures to combat right-wing politically motivated crimes was completely overhauled and recommendations for action were added, ensuring that the relevant offences can be perceived, recorded and combated in a more targeted manner. Fourthly, the police forces of the Federal Länder support victims' assistance projects, associations and institutions and other counselling bodies in an effort to encourage those seeking help to come forward, to reduce barriers and to raise confidence in the police and their work.

29. Germany also reported that the Bundesrat, with the active support of the Federal Government, has decided to initiate procedures before the Federal Constitutional Court to ban a right-wing extremist party.

Greece

30. Greece outlined the legislative framework as well as a number of measures and actions implemented by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs that contribute to combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief. Religious freedom in Greece is enshrined in article 13 of the Constitution, in the relevant international conventions signed by the country and, in particular, in article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

31. The Orthodox Church of Greece is autocephalous and self-governing and recognized by the Constitution as the "dominant" religion owing to its long cultural tradition. Although this constitutional provision institutionally guarantees the Orthodox Church, it does not mean or imply in any way some reduction or restriction of the religious freedom of other religions since article 13 of the Constitution protects the right to free religious conscience and the expression of religious beliefs. In Greece, the dialogue between State and ecclesiastical jurisdictions and religious communities is constitutionally guaranteed and regulated within the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom.

32. The Greek authorities have taken the necessary steps for the construction of a mosque in the municipality of Athens, to be financed exclusively by national funds and the tender for its construction was awarded in November 2013. A decision of the Supreme Administrative Court on an appeal against the construction of the mosque in the designated site is expected to be considered in 2014. A special law has also been drafted to assist with the construction of new mosques, and the reconstruction of already existing mosques, in the region of Thrace.

33. Since the 1990s, the "Education of the Muslim minority children of Thrace" project has been a policy of the State aimed at upgrading the education of the children of this minority and fostering their integration in society as equal citizens of Greece and the European Union. In accordance with the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, Greece guarantees the proper functioning of the existing minority schools, supported and funded by the State. The majority of children of primary school age attend bilingual minority education programmes, under which both Greek and Turkish are used as languages of instruction, but also constitute separate language subjects in the curriculum.

34. With regard to the education of Jews in Greece, the Ministry of Education allows for the appointment of teaching staff, at public expense, in the schools of the Jewish communities in Athens and Thessaloniki, in response to their requests. In addition, Greece provides for the operation of the 80th Primary School in Larissa, a public Jewish school that has been in existence since 1931, in which teachers of both Greek and Hebrew are appointed by the State.

35. The General Secretariat for Religious Affairs, in collaboration with the General Secretariat for Youth and the Jewish Museum of Greece, is implementing an educational activity entitled "Teaching about the Holocaust in Greece". Every year,

the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, in cooperation with the Jewish Museum of Greece, organizes educational visits of non-Jewish students to the Auschwitz Museum in Poland.

36. The Hellenic Police has established a telephone code (11414) that allows for secure, anonymous and protected private communications, reports or complaints about any criminal behaviour with racist characteristics or motives. A part of the police website (www.astynomia.gr) has been devoted to racist violence matters. A mechanism for recording racist and xenophobic incidents and a unified database have been established, with a view to promptly notifying international organizations and monitoring the progress of all relevant cases. In addition, a unified State mechanism for recording racist incidents has been set up within the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights. The Hellenic Police forwards the data reported to, or recorded by, their services to the Ministry of Justice for further processing as well as for monitoring the progress of the relevant cases.

37. Circular 7100/4/3, dated 24 May 2006, on dealing with racism, xenophobia and intolerance during the performance of police officers' duties stipulates that police officers should examine whether there is a racist motive behind a criminal offence. All police personnel receive a guide on police behaviour towards religious and vulnerable social groups, listing the different categories of vulnerable groups and giving clear instructions as to the behaviour of police officers towards such groups. There is a continuous effort for their further training on human rights and, more specifically, on dealing with incidents of racism or intolerance and on respecting the particularities of those belonging to vulnerable social groups living in Greece.

38. The Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights reported that on 20 November 2013, a new anti-racist draft law entitled "Amendment of Law 927/1979 and adaptation to the Council of the European Union Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008, on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law" was submitted to Parliament. The draft law (after its discussion in the framework of the competent parliamentary committee) will be discussed by the plenum, once scheduled by Parliament.

Italy

39. The protection of religion, particularly with regard to individuals, associations and religious organizations, is guaranteed in accordance with articles 8 and 19 of the Constitution of Italy, which concern the establishment of relationships between the State and religious denominations and the right to freedom of religion. Italy recalled that there is no State religion, other than the agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Government of Italy. Over the years, the Government has signed several agreements (*intese*) with other denominations, which provide, inter alia, for the autonomy and independence of these denominations and provide for issues fundamental for believers and religious practices. These *intese* generally include provisions for spiritual assistance in collective institutions; education; recognition of civil marriages; fiscal treatment and financial relations between the State and the religious denominations; protection of places of worship and cultural and historical assets; guarantees regarding cultural identity; free exercise or worship; and religious festivities and organizations. Several *intese* have been concluded over the years with

denominations and new agreements are being defined with other religious organizations.

40. Italy noted that religious denominations without these agreements enjoy the same treatment as others and that the absence of an *intesa* does not affect a religious group's ability to worship freely. A denomination that does not sign an *intesa* is still able to apply for financial support of the State for the building of religious sites, consistent with the purpose stated in the denomination's statute and previous public manifestations.

41. The Office of Studies and Institutional Relations at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers carries out activities aimed at implementing constitutional provisions for freedom of religion; raising public awareness of freedom of thought and religion; maintaining relations with all religious denominations in Italy; affirming the principle of equal dignity of all religious denominations; and preventing discrimination. The Office is in continuous contact and cooperation with the national organization of the Jewish community, mainly on issues related to the implementation of the *intesa* and problems of discrimination.

42. Italy reported that since 2005, it has been fostering a dialogue between the State and the Muslim community and that the Ministry of the Interior has established the Council for Islam in Italy. Since 2010, a Committee for Italian Islam has been focusing on issues of integration and the exercise of civil rights. It reported that in 2011, the Ministry for International Cooperation and Integration, promoted the "Conference of religions, culture and integration", intended to enhance the religious factor in the process of mutual understanding, dialogue between cultures and integration of migrants. It added that the Ministry of the Interior has funded projects to promote interfaith dialogue within the framework of the European Integration Fund.

43. The National Office against Racial Discrimination, established within the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and operating as a national equality body, takes concrete steps to ensure that protection against discrimination is effectively and properly enforced.

44. Italy reported that innovative initiatives and actions have been aimed at increasing the level of protection and support for victims facing discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, including awareness-raising campaigns (particularly on Holocaust Remembrance Day), as well as a number of events taking place during the National Week against Racial Discrimination.

Luxembourg

45. Luxembourg has repeatedly spoken in favour of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and condemned racism and xenophobia in all its forms and manifestations, both nationally and internationally. Luxembourg participated in the fifth United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held in February 2013 in Vienna, co-signing the Vienna Declaration, and together with the Council of Europe, Luxembourg held the 2011 meeting of the Council of Europe on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue.

46. Under the principles of religious freedom (the freedom to have a religion or not, and to abandon or change religion) and free public exercise of religion

contained in article 19 of the Constitution, all communities can exercise, including in public, their beliefs without reservation, in conformity with domestic law. Luxembourg reported that dozens of religious or philosophical communities coexist and work in the country. The Constitution guarantees all citizens equality before the law. In the absence of a provision to the contrary, foreigners in the territory of the Grand Duchy are treated as nationals (article 10 bis and 111 combined with the Constitution and law of the Constitutional Court). Article 19 of the Constitution stipulates that "freedom of worship, public practice, and freedom to manifest religious opinions are guaranteed, except for the punishment of offences committed in connection with the use of these freedoms".

47. It noted that the Chamber of Deputies has clarified the criteria for the establishment and operation of a religious community to be in agreement with article 22 of the Constitution. The Government programme, adopted following the elections of October 2013, represented a fundamental change in the relationship between the State and religions in respect of the equal treatment between religious groups as well as the neutrality and independence of the State, and established a commitment for the Government to consult and engage with the different religions represented in the country. The programme also redefined the relationship between municipalities and worship, and established a single, neutral and harmonized "values education" for all students at primary and secondary education institutions.

48. Under the principle of religious freedom, all religions may be practised in Luxembourg provided they respect public order. Religions can receive subsidies to cover part of the costs of their operations, regardless of whether they are contracted or not. At present, eight religious groups — Catholic, Protestant, Reformed Protestant, Anglican, Jewish, Serbian Orthodox, Romanian and Greek — receive such support. Luxembourg noted that the Russian Orthodox Church has recently announced its interest in an agreement and negotiations were held with the Muslim community but stopped at the request of the Chamber of Deputies, given the possible future fundamental reform of the current legal system.

49. Dialogue with religious communities in the country — including the Muslim community — began in February 2014 and further meetings are planned in order to initiate the process of legislative or constitutional reform.

50. The Luxembourg Office of Reception and Integration deals with the reception and integration of foreigners in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The Centre for Equal Treatment carries out its tasks independently and promotes, analyses and monitors the equal treatment of all persons without discrimination based on race or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or age.

51. The basic text that prohibits discrimination based on religious grounds is contained in title 8, chapter 6 of Penal Code Book 2, entitled "Racism, revisionism and other forms of discrimination". The Penal Code also sanctions (imprisonment from eight days to two years and/or a fine of 251 euros to 25,000 euros) incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence against a person or entity, group or community based on one of the elements referred to in article 454. Incitement to discrimination, violence or hatred based on membership (or non-membership) or religious belief, actual or supposed, is punishable (article 457-1). Denial is considered to be a form or manifestation of racism or xenophobia and incitement to racial or religious hatred, and article 457-3 punishes the challenging, minimizing, justifying or

denying the existence of one or more crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide.

Mexico

52. Mexico reported on the various actions carried out by the National Council to Prevent Discrimination. The Council has carried out a number of activities aimed at promoting dialogue. Since 2011, it has held a round table on "Religions for non-discrimination," in order to have a dialogue with representatives of various religions and to be aware of the problems of discrimination to which they are subjected, as well as their perceptions of discrimination in the country. This round table meets quarterly and seeks to create a forum that allows the religious groups to be aware of discrimination cases and to take joint action. On 13 November 2013, the Council held a forum on religious freedom and non-discrimination within the context of the International Day of Tolerance at the Museum of Memory and Tolerance. Similarly, the International Week of Lay Culture was held from 18 to 20 March 2014.

53. The Council has also participated in other conferences and events on religious issues. A workshop on anti-Semitism and religious intolerance organized by the Facing History and Ourselves Organization and the Pan-American Development Foundation was held in March 2014. The Council also participated in an online conference on diversity and religious discrimination in America.

54. Mexico stated that the Council is empowered to receive complaints against acts of discrimination, based on the provisions of the Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination (CONAPRED/DGAELPP/107/132). This law strengthens protection guarantees and the right to equality and non-discrimination and the prohibition of discrimination. One of the major achievements under this reform is the single unification of the complaints procedure, which is now compulsory for both the public service and private individuals. Similarly, the reformed law includes a section on reconciliation which, according to article 64, is the stage of the grievance procedure at which the Council tries, as appropriate, to reconcile the parties to resolve an issue, always ensuring the maximum protection of the rights of the victims of discriminatory behaviour or social practices.

55. Between 2010 and 2014, the Council reported that it had received and responded to 31 complaints and claims related to alleged acts of discrimination based on religion or belief, 87 per cent of which were acts attributed to individuals. The main grounds of the alleged acts of discrimination were related to anti-Semitism, religious beliefs, religion or conscience.

56. The Council promotes programmes and educational activities that contribute to building a culture of equality and respect for the fundamental rights of all people. The distance education programme, called CONNECT, has a specific course entitled "Tolerance and diversity of belief". In 2013, 959 people participated in this course.

Paraguay

57. Paraguay stated that article 24 of the Constitution protects religious freedom and belief.

58. Under the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Vice-Ministry of Culture is in charge of registering all churches and religious entities and it carries out a series of activities to promote respect among registered churches and religious and philosophical associations.

59. The Permanent Forum of Interreligious Dialogue of Paraguay, established by ministerial resolution 28561/11, aims at interreligious cooperation and organizes periodic meetings, as well as national and international conferences, seminars and expert meetings, with the participation and involvement of religious and philosophical communities and the community in general.

60. The Vice-Ministry of Culture had received no complaints regarding cases of discrimination based on intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization or incitement to hatred or discrimination based on religion and belief.

Philippines

61. In order to address grave concerns raised by the National Commission on Muslim Affairs regarding alleged discriminatory acts committed against Muslim women in schools, workplaces and Government agencies in the country, the Philippine Commission on Human Rights released Human Rights Advisory No. A2013-002 on 8 August 2013, on the issue of the wearing of headscarves and veils in the form of hijabs, burkas and niqabs in schools, universities and other training institutions.

62. Philippines reported that this Advisory states that, in applying the provisions of the Philippine Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, it is clear, unambiguous and unequivocal that Muslim women have the right to wear hijabs and that national agencies have a corresponding mandate to ensure that such exercise of religious belief is not breached by any State actor or private individual except when warranted by the standards set out by law.

63. The Commission on Human Rights then directed the Presidential Human Rights Committee within the Office of the President to issue a proposed appropriate communication that would underscore the policy of the Government to respect the wearing of headscarves or hijabs by Muslim women. It also directed various Government agencies to issue the appropriate directives and formulate policy guidelines on the wearing of headscarves or hijabs by Muslim women for implementation and compliance by Government agencies, schools, universities and training centres, and private companies.

Russian Federation

64. The Constitution of the Russian Federation, in particular articles 14 (1) and 28, guarantees freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion or no religion, to freely choose, possess or disseminate religions or beliefs and to act in conformity with them. Article 29 of the Constitution guarantees the right of all persons to freedom of thought and speech. Propaganda or campaigning to incite social, racial, national or

religious hatred or enmity are impermissible. Propaganda of social, racial, national, religious or linguistic superiority is prohibited.

65. In accordance with the Presidential Decree on the Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation until 2025 (No. 1666 of 19 December 2012), the elimination and prevention of any form of discrimination on social, racial, national, linguistic or religious grounds are among the components of the State's national policy.

66. The legislation of the Russian Federation envisages application of a wide spectrum of criminal and administrative measures and responsibility for acts of extremism. The Russian Federation reported that this legislation fully corresponds with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 68/169. Article 282 of the Criminal Code establishes criminal liability for acts intended to incite hatred, enmity or hostility, or the humiliation of a person or a group of persons on the grounds of, inter alia, sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin or religion.

67. Article 15 of the Federal Law on the Counteracting of Extremist Activities stipulates an obligation to compile a federal list of materials considered extremist by the courts. On 3 February 2014, Federal Law N5FL strengthened measures and liability for extremist activities, including for crimes of extremism motivated by religious hatred or enmity. In the case of actions aimed at the complete or partial extermination of a religious group by killing its members, inflicting grave injuries to their health or by creating living conditions aimed at their physical destruction, liability will come under article 357 ("Genocide") of the Criminal Code.

68. A number of measures are also envisaged in the Administration Code for actions that will not be considered a crime. To assist law enforcement bodies in their work in investigating crimes committed on the grounds in question, a special methodological manual was published on how to qualify crimes motivated by political, ideological, racial, national or religious hatred or enmity towards a social group.

Saudi Arabia

69. Saudi Arabia reported that it is a country which is Arab and Islamic, and based on the Koran and the Shariah, which is based on justice and equality and rejects discrimination on the basis of religion and beliefs.

70. The Ministry for Muslim Affairs, on 7 December 2011, presented a document to all imams and religious leaders in the country ordering that they address others with respect and that they not "demonize" or criticize other people, religions or branches of religion. Failure to comply with this order is met with a sanction, and people have been penalized pursuant to it. It added that over 29,900 seminars and 30 specialized training sessions directed at 2,515 imams and religious leaders have been held. Similar initiatives are also being carried out by the Ministry of Education in schools across the country, and teachers have been sanctioned for discriminatory behaviour. Saudi Arabia has signed an accord with the King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture in order to hold dialogues and train 40,000 imams to be increasingly tolerant in their religious addresses and activities.

71. Saudi Arabia noted that article 61 of the Labour Law prohibited servitude and the withholding of full or partial salary without a court decision, and also provided

that workers be treated with dignity and respect, including with regard to their religion. Article 6 of the Law to Combat Cybercrimes provided for a penalty of a maximum of five years or 3 million rials for use of social media and/or technology to incite people or insult the system/establishment in Saudi Arabia, religious values, morality, or private life.

72. The Kingdom is developing an educational curriculum to enshrine the values of Islam and tolerance of others, as well as to combat radicalism with respect to religion and branches of religion. It aims to deepen dialogue on religious and cultural issues, in a spirit of tolerance and harmony. It noted that since its launch in 2008, the King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture was sponsoring dialogues among all religions and civilizations and had organized conferences in Madrid, New York and Geneva.

73. It reported that the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue was established in 2011 in Vienna, and an extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was held in Mecca on 14 and 15 August 2012 on the subject of Islamic principles and combating radicalism, under the auspices of the King of Saudi Arabia.

Switzerland

74. Switzerland reported on measures to promote a domestic climate of religious tolerance, peace and respect. It stated that Jewish communities (numbering about 17,000 people) in the cantons of Zurich, Bern, Fribourg, Basel-Stadt, St. Gallen and Vaud have a public law status while, in other cantons, they are organized as associations. It stated that there are two umbrella organizations at the national level: the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities and the Platform of Liberal Jews in Switzerland. Between 2001 and 2013, the Department for the Fight against Racism supported 60 projects to raise awareness against anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. As part of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, Switzerland has also set up a support group to carry out projects such as study tours and trips for continuing education.

75. There are 330,000 Muslims in Switzerland who represent 4.9 per cent of the population. Currently, there is no national association representing all Muslim people in Switzerland; however, there are two umbrella organizations, namely, the Coordination of Islamic Organizations of Switzerland and the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Switzerland.

76. In November 2009, an initiative called "Against the construction of minarets" was approved — 57.5 per cent in favour and 42.5 per cent against — by voters in Switzerland. It was reported that this vote was at the forefront of the question of relations between the majority of society and religious minorities. A new paragraph in article 72 of the Federal Constitution has reintroduced a convocational provision at the federal level for the first time since the repeal of the article in 2001. It is in this context that federal authorities launched, in 2009, a dialogue with the Muslim population in order to fight against fear and stigma around Islam and to discuss issues of integration.

77. On 16 December 2011, the Federal Council took note of the consensus report entitled "Engaging the Muslim population: an exchange between federal authorities

and Muslims in Switzerland," which summarizes the most significant aspects that emerged from the dialogue, notably the recognition of the principles of the Constitution, such as equality before the law, the rule of law and democracy. It presents the measures taken by the Confederation and the cantons to encourage integration and equality of opportunity for Muslims and to ensure the peaceful coexistence of all people living in Switzerland, including a review of the admission of persons engaged in the management of religious activities, compatibility between religion and the obligation to serve, and any training for imams and those responsible for religious guidance.

78. Switzerland noted that following the acceptance of the popular initiative called "Against the construction of minarets", the Federal Council decided in 2010 to publish a report on the situation of Muslims in Switzerland (issued in May 2013). It stated that the key findings of the report show that the vast majority of Muslims participate in Swiss society and that their religion does not expose them to specific problems in their daily lives in Switzerland and rarely leads to conflict.

Turkey

79. Turkey reported that it has signed and ratified all of the human rights conventions that protect the non-Muslim minorities' rights to belief and worship. The general instruction issued by the Ministry of the Interior in 2007 includes measures to eliminate instances that may hinder freedom of religion and belief and promotes work on coexistence. Delegations composed of Minority Problems Evaluation Board members have made several periodic contacts with various religious community representatives, providing the opportunity to resolve the issues brought up by the representatives of the non-Muslim religious community leaders. Under the coordination of the Ministry of European Union Affairs, delegations composed of the Ministry of European Union Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of the Interior conducted numerous meetings with religious community leaders and senior clerics between 2006 and 2010.

80. Turkey also reported that religious foundations have been granted the right to hold immovable property to support their religious, charity, social, educational, medical and cultural needs by Law No. 4778, on Amendments to Several Laws. The term "mosque" was changed to "place of worship" in the construction law by Law No. 4928, on Amendments to Several Laws. With this amendment, any barriers to the construction of non-Muslim worship places were removed.

81. A project on raising the awareness of the public administration and law enforcement officers in combating discrimination was accepted on 18 April 2014, and is being undertaken within the framework of alignment with the European Union process. "Society-backed policing" (*Toplum Destekli Polislik*), which went into effect in 2006, aims at preventing discrimination and at promoting contact and cooperation with the different segments of society. In order to raise awareness on combating discrimination and violence, units specializing in society-backed policing conduct various projects throughout the country.

82. Anti-discrimination efforts with respect to the judiciary and administrative affairs are also being made in Turkey. According to the May 2010 circular issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, which was published in the official journal (No. 27580), necessary precautions were ordered in order to eliminate any problems

caused by the implementation of any operation regarding the non-Muslim minorities and to immediately take legal action against any publications expressing enmity and hatred towards non-Muslim minorities.

83. Article 122 of the Turkish Penal Code, entitled "discrimination", was amended to "enmity and hatred" by the Law on Amendments to Several Laws in order to Promote Basic Rights and Liberties (2014). According to this article, "any person committing the following with an intention of linguistic, racial, national, gender, colour, handicap, political or philosophical view, religion and sect based discrimination will be sentenced to 1 to 3 years of imprisonment for preventing: (a) the sale, rental or transfer of a publicly offered good to a specific person; (b) a specific person's enjoyment of a service offered to the public; (c) the employment of a specific person; or (d) a specific person's economic activities."

84. Students have freedom of religion and conscience and there can be no hindrance to the freedom of religion and conscience in schools (articles 12 and 24 of the Constitution), and according to article 12 of the Basic Law on National Education, secularism is one of the basic elements of the Turkish education system.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

85. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland outlined key legislation to protect victims and tackle offenders, such as specific offences for stirring up hatred on the grounds of race, religion and sexual orientation (under part 3 and part 3A of the Public Order Act 1986 as amended); separate racially and religiously aggravated offences, which carry a higher maximum penalty than non-aggravated offences (under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998); and powers for the courts to increase the sentence of an offender convicted of a crime, where hostility towards the victim is based on their disability, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity (under the Criminal Justice Act 2003) to reflect the seriousness of hate crime.

86. In March 2012, a cross-Government action plan was published in England to tackle hate crime, bringing together the work of a wide range of departments and agencies to: prevent hate crime; increase reporting and victims' access to support; and improve the operational response to hate crimes. It includes specific work programmes to tackle anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred, and actions to better engage with disabled, transgender, Gypsy, Traveller and Roma, and new migrant communities — as well as tackling racism, homophobia and transphobia in sports.

87. The Government has conducted a review of its actions under three core principles: (a) building the evidence base on hate crime by improving police recording of hate crimes with regard to disability, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation and transgender-identity; (b) strengthening its "robust" legal framework; and (c) investing direct funding support to professionals at the frontline, to voluntary sector organizations and to victims of hate crime.

88. It stated that one challenge that has continued to evolve is the task of removing hate material from mass media channels such as the Internet, while also protecting freedom of expression. The Government is working with the police and the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime to build relationships with leading social media providers and to improve their response to offensive and illegal hate-

related content online, including through support to the international working group of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism. The Director for Public Prosecutions has also published guidelines for prosecuting cases involving social media communications, including hate crimes.

89. The Government has strongly condemned anti-Muslim hatred and targeted attacks on religious establishments, and has noted that the wider community coming together in support of affected Muslim communities demonstrates resilience and solidarity. It outlined a number of projects under way, including: (a) the first ever cross-Government working group on anti-Muslim hatred; (b) the launch of Tell MAMA, the first third-party reporting service to record incidents and support victims of anti-Muslim hatred; (c) the hosting the United Kingdom's first ever Srebrenica Memorial Day; (d) the Department of Communities and Local Government supporting social media workshops aimed at countering hatred online in Birmingham and Leeds, following two initial workshops held in London and Manchester; and (e) the Department of Communities and Local Government holding a number of regional road shows around the United Kingdom in March and April 2014 to promote the work of integration and combat anti-Muslim hatred, and to engage with the communities to find out what more could be done by the Government.

90. The United Kingdom is also taking wider measures to promote integration and cooperation between faith groups, through funding in the Church Urban Fund's Near Neighbours programme, to build productive "working friendships" between people of different faiths in target areas of high diversity and deprivation. It reports that to date, this programme has supported 580 projects that foster a greater sense of togetherness or community spirit. The Together in Service programme, launched during Interfaith Week in November 2013, supports the social action of different faith communities around the country, through small grants initiating new interfaith social action projects.

III. Conclusions

91. **Based on the information provided by Member States on the efforts and measures taken for the implementation of the action plan outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of General Assembly resolution 68/169, States continue to take steps that are primarily policy-oriented and/or legal in nature. All reporting States have constitutional provisions concerning freedom of religion and belief and have enacted (or are in the process of enacting or amending) domestic legislation, criminal codes and civil laws in order to protect against discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief.**

92. **The responses highlight that advocacy of incitement to hatred is for the most part criminalized and often prohibited on several grounds, including on the grounds of religion or belief. Some Member States noted that the Government and political officials have spoken out against religious intolerance. It was also noted that freedom of expression and opinion was important to countering religious intolerance, negative stereotyping and incitement to hatred or violence. The importance of interfaith and intercultural dialogue was underlined in several submissions. Interfaith dialogue is taking place at the local, national and regional levels, and the majority of Member**

States also financially support such initiatives. Member States are also actively involved in interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the international level.

93. Member States reported that generally there is religious freedom and pluralism domestically and that members of religious groups and communities are able to manifest their religion and contribute openly and on an equal footing to society. This religious freedom is often guaranteed by constitutional regimes and law, provided it is in accordance with domestic law. Several responses indicated the domestic legal frameworks providing for the practice of religion and the status, functioning and management of religious communities and associations, and a few responses noted the need to encourage representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion or belief, in all sectors of society, and acknowledged challenges in this regard.

94. Training of Government and public officials, especially of the law enforcement, police and security services, is taking place in many countries. In this training context, issues of religious profiling are sometimes addressed.

95. Several responses noted that extremism and radicalization, often leading to hate crimes and violence, were being addressed through social cohesion and integration programmes and police and security responses, often coupled with regular engagement and interaction with religious leaders, local communities and young people, as well as data-gathering and monitoring.

96. Almost all countries provide for a channel or some form of communication and consultation between religious groups, minorities and communities and the governmental authorities. Numerous practical examples were provided about communication bodies and/or forums between State institutions and religious groups or communities, with regard to policing and security matters, or as general forums of exchange. A number of States are involved in networks comprised of, inter alia, civil society, Government officials, police and representatives of religious communities.

97. Member States reported that they are undertaking measures and adopting policies to promote full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and are taking protective measures in cases where these are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction.

98. Religious intolerance, stigmatization, negative stereotyping, and discrimination, in particular, are addressed through public information and media campaigns and through educational measures. Member States are also funding local and national projects aimed at increasing capacity-building, social cohesion, interfaith dialogue and the participation of religious groups, minorities and communities.